

# ***Nature, Nurture, and Culture: Behavior and Characteristics, School Experiences, and Social Environment of Selected Filipino Gifted***

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**Abstract:** *This paper presents a case study on the profile of behaviors, characteristics, and study habits of gifted Filipino individuals. It explores the important role of school experiences in nurturing the giftedness and gifted potentials of the gifted. It also analyzes the impact of the learning environment in nurturing the giftedness and gifted potentials of selected gifted Filipinos. The results affirmed that giftedness is an inborn potential. It is the nature of the gifted to have exceptional abilities and talents, which can be given proper nurture in the school so that their exceptional abilities and talents can be developed, sustained, and enhanced. Culture factors like the family, community, and religion also play an important role in the development of gifted Filipinos. The gifted draw inspiration from their families, community, and religion to aspire for greater success in their lives, which is one of the Filipino values.*

**Keywords:** *gifted; gifted characteristics; school environment; culture*

## **Introduction**

The purpose of this study is to identify the behavior, characteristics, and study habits of selected gifted Filipino, discover how school experiences have contributed to the development of their giftedness and potentials, and describe the social environment where they live. Gifted individuals are invaluable gifts to humanity. They exhibit high performance capability in intellectual and creative pursuits, possess an unusual leadership capacity, or excel in specific academic fields (Sternberg, 2004). Giftedness is a product of nature, nurture, and culture.

Gifted people may have common characteristics and behaviors. However, the researcher believes that there are cultural factors that influence the development of gifted individuals. The socio-cultural contexts in which the gifted are immersed certainly affect their development, behavior, and success. This study will look closely on the personal, academic and cultural factors that helped shape and develop the abilities and talents of Filipino gifted.

### *Conceptions of Giftedness*

The concept of giftedness varies among different scholars. Davis, Rimm, and Siegle (2011) noted that there is no one definition of “*gifted*” that is universally accepted. Some scholars refer to it as having special talents and abilities, while others think of it as a state of high intellect or genius. The concept of giftedness is always associated with the attributes of great people having great accomplishments, developing great ideas, or producing great works, inventions or performances. Giftedness is also associated with people having outstanding talents.

Tannenbaum (2003) proposed a definition of giftedness to include potentials for becoming critically acclaimed performers or exemplary producers of ideas in spheres of activity that enhance the moral, physical, emotional, social, intellectual, or aesthetic life of humanity. For Gagne (1985), giftedness refers to domains of human abilities and talents to domains of human accomplishments. Giftedness also involves excellence, rarity, productivity, demonstrability, and value attached to the skills/products of the individual (Sternberg & Zhang, 1995).

### *General Characteristics of Gifted Individuals*

Gifted individuals are people from various ages who show evidences of high intellectual ability, special artistic talents, and creativity in different areas. As to their intellectual ability, Davis, Rimm, and Siegle (2011) observed that gifted individuals are developmentally advanced in language and thought; are quick and logical in terms of their thinking processes, have advanced mathematical, musical and artistic abilities; and possess high motivation with persistence.

Pufal-Struzik (1999) noted that gifted students are as well or even better adjusted than regular students are, and have better self-concepts and greater overall self-actualization. They possess high levels of independence, self-confidence, and internal control, sense of humor, and high moral thinking and empathy (Davis, Rimm, and Siegle, 2011). Renzuli and Reis (1997) also noted that gifted students have preferences in terms of instructional style, learning environment, thinking style, and expression style. Watters and Diezmann (2003) observed that gifted students in lower primary level are likely to be faster, more intensely involved, and more abstract in their approach and solutions to problems. Pfeiffer and Blei (2008) identified gifted characteristics like: (1) intellectual ability, (2) academic ability, (3) creativity, (4) artistic talent, (5) leadership ability, and (6) motivation.

Calvin Taylor (1988) raised awareness that gifted students possess special skills and talents like academic, productive thinking, communicating, forecasting, decision-making, planning, implementing, human relations, and discerning opportunities. Howard Gardner presented a similar theory with his Theory of Multiple Intelligence (1983, 1999) identifying nine intelligences: linguistic, logico-mathematical, spatial, musical, bodily kinesthetic, interpersonal, intrapersonal, naturalist, and existential intelligences.

Some scholars like Cox, Daniel, and Boston (1985) preferred to use the term *able learners* rather than using the term *gifted*. Renzuli (1994) shared the same sentiment and preferred to use the phrase “*gifted behaviors*” which can be developed in certain students at certain times and in certain circumstances.

Many gifted learners struggle with motivation in schools (Smutny & von Fremd, 2009; Reis and McCoach, 2000). According to Hennessy (2004), this is understandable given that gifted learners tend to perform better in situations where they have some control over their learning rather than in doing traditional school routines. Watters and Diezmann (2003) pointed out that while some children will challenge obstacles, modify their environment and overcome adversity, most children require a nurturing and stimulating environment at both home and school to maximize their potentials and to help shape the directions they will take.

In the context of this study, the researcher believes that personal and social factors such as family, community values, and culture greatly influence the development of gifted individuals. It is a challenge to examine the characteristics, school experiences, and the social environment that shaped the lives of Filipino gifted. Taber (2007) encourages educators and researchers in gifted education to study carefully the nature and needs of gifted people.

### ***Methodology***

This is a qualitative study that utilizes descriptive and case study methods to identify the gifted characteristics of selected Filipino gifted individuals. It utilizes data from the results of interview, questionnaire, discussion, and personal encounters with the gifted. Specifically, this study answered the following questions:

1. What are the behavioral characteristics and study habits of Filipino gifted?
2. What are the school experiences that helped the gifted students discover and meet their needs?
3. What is the role of the social environment in the development of Filipino gifted?

### ***Research Participants***

Purposive sampling was used to identify and select 10 Filipino gifted individuals who participated in this study. The researcher selected gifted individuals from the domains of Science, Mathematics, Language, Social Sciences, and Humanities. These 10 gifted participants were already identified as gifted and are also known to possess exceptional talents in arts, music, sports, and literature.

Six of these gifted studied in public schools while the four studied in private schools. They have received different academic awards and high recognition from their previous schools. Eight of them were assessed and recognized as gifted by their respective schools, while the other two were recognized for their outstanding talents by their teachers, peers, and by the communities where they belong.

### Research Instrument

An interview guide was used to gather data about the family background, learning styles, study habits, and community involvements of the gifted participants. The questions are not structured in order to allow the researcher to make follow-up interview on important information about the gifted.

### Data Gathering Procedure

The researcher had the privilege of having personal encounters with these gifted individuals. One on one interview and discussion was set with the 6 gifted individuals. This provided opportunities also for the researcher to observe their gifted behaviors and characteristics in natural settings. The other four gifted interviewed online. A questionnaire was also sent for them to answer. To gather additional important information and to validate some data, the researcher conducted online follow-up interviews with them.

### Data Analysis

Using the narrative research strategy proposed by Clandinin and Connelly (2000), the researcher studied the lives of 10 selected Filipino gifted individuals and asked them to provide stories about their lives through interview. The researcher reported the information into a narrative chronology that provided meanings that are relevant to the aims of the study.

The researcher used thematic analysis to analyze the result of interviews. Only the important information and statements of the participants were recorded for the analysis. Some of these original responses of the gifted participants were included in this paper to provide support to the analysis. The statements were organized into different themes. Statements that include confidential information were excluded to respect the privacy of the research participants.

## Results and Discussion

### *I. Nature: Characteristics, Behaviors, and Study Habits of Selected Filipino Gifted*

The result of the study provided the researcher a general profile of the characteristics of selected Filipino gifted. Table 1 shows the general profile and areas of giftedness of the selected gifted participants.

**Table 1. General Profile of the Gifted Participants**

<b>Gifted</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>Area/Domain of Giftedness</b>	<b>Special Talents</b>
<b>Gifted 1</b>	22	Math/Physics/Philosophy	Music/Piano
<b>Gifted 2</b>	21	Social Sciences/Literature	Music/Composition/Literature
<b>Gifted 3</b>	20	Social Sciences	Music/Guitar/Organ
<b>Gifted 4</b>	24	Math/Science	Speech/Declamation
<b>Gifted 5</b>	22	Math/Language	Arts/Music/Dance
<b>Gifted 6</b>	19	Music	Sports/Dance
<b>Gifted 7</b>	19	Music	Sports
<b>Gifted 8</b>	17	Math/Social Science	Language/Leadership
<b>Gifted 9</b>	22	Language/Literature	Music/Guitar/Composition
<b>Gifted 10</b>	26	Science	Music/Dance/Language

Their profile also shows that while gifted individuals possessed outstanding performance or ability in one or more disciplines, and they also possessed special. Filipinos have always been known to possess special talents in music, arts, and some areas in sports.

**Table 2 General Characteristics of Selected Filipino Gifted**

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- High intellectual ability
  - Unconventional thinking
  - Creative and resourceful
  - Open-minded, insightful and analytical
  - Intuitive and reflective
  - Possesses special talent
  - Has high expectations of self
  - Is interested in advanced and various topics
  - Persistent and highly motivated
  - Has high sense of social responsibility
  - Exhibits leadership ability
  - Is capable of interdisciplinary thinking
  - Is capable of doing multi-task
  - Is highly motivated and goal oriented
  - Has a good sense of humor
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Table 2 shows the observed gifted behaviors and characteristics of these individuals. These general characteristics of the Filipino gifted students conform to the results of previous studies that gifted individuals possess a high level of intellect, special talent, and leadership skills. The eight gifted participants possessed very high intellectual ability. They consistently received various awards and recognitions for their academic achievements and for winning in various competitions while representing their schools. Two of the gifted said during the interview:

Gifted 1: "I'm a person who wants to learn out of mere love for learning."

Gifted 2: "We wanted to excel in academics but we never thought of doing it because of awards. To get an award will be a plus factor but not a necessity."

Gifted 4: "It is natural to us. We just love studying."

Many Filipinos are known to be religious. Since majority of the respondents are Christians, they believe that their special abilities were blessings from God. They believe they should be used to benefit other people. One of the gifted mentioned:

Gifted 10: "I have realized early on in my life that intelligence and talent are gifts from God. I should use them for God's glory. "

The gifted think in unconventional ways. They are creative, open minded and analytical. Their ideas and comments never stop once they are engaged in a discussion, debate, or argumentation on an interesting topic. They are idealistic in expressing views about social

issues. They are also inquisitive about various interesting issues and topics. For example, four gifted said the following during the interview:

Gifted 1: “We dine out often, and in fact get a cup of coffee or tea often while discussing topics as diverse as what happened the other day and other socio-political issues.”

Gifted 3: “I enjoyed Social Science. I guess we need to think critically about different social issues. We should not just stay silent and wait for good things to happen. We need to act! The people need us.”

Gifted 6: “I love to engage myself in different forms of discussions. I am interested to know the points of view of other people. I also wanted to share my ideas to them. “

Gifted 5: “I always wanted to share what I have and what I know to people. I am also a great listener. I am amazed by the ideas I am learning from different individuals. “

The gifted do not want to be considered as special, but they are aware of their interests and strengths. Expressing or utilizing their abilities and talents is important to them. They are highly motivated in everything that interests them. They can do things independently and are also capable of doing multi-tasks. The following are the response made by five of the gifted:

Gifted 3: “I got my talent in playing the guitar and piano by studying alone. “

Gifted 6: “I don't have any formal lesson in music. I just watch how people play instruments, listen to their music, and that's all! After that I can play better than them. “

Gifted 7: “I just wanted to perform...I never thought of appreciation. What is important to me is I was able to express my thoughts through the Arts. “

Gifted 1: “I understand that Math is in everything. I find Math in Philosophy, Language, Music, Visual Arts and even in the simplest things we do at home.“

Gifted 4: “My passion in learning is natural for me.... I just love studying.”

The researcher observed that these gifted participants could not be confined to doing simple things or in thinking simply about a certain issue. They are insightful and passionate in sharing their ideas. They always want to work on challenging topics and minds-one discussions. They take the lead, provoke interesting discussions, and ask unconventional questions to teachers and classmates. For example, two of them said:

Gifted 8: “I love having intellectually stimulating discussions with my peers and with those who are older than I am and who are willing to listen.”

Gifted 9: “If the lessons are boring, I just prefer to study at home and go to school during exams.”

The gifted are knowledgeable in different areas. They are capable of thinking in an interdisciplinary way. They get ideas from various people, books, magazines, and academic journals. They are natural leaders in school. Almost all of them became classroom officers, student council leaders, or officers in different organizations in their school.

Table 3 shows the study habits of the gifted participants as noted during the interview. All of them said that they are not nerds or overly serious students. However, they are

capable of learning in an extraordinary way. They know what they want to learn and they are capable of understanding many things. They are aware of their learning habits and learning styles. For example, these are some of the responses of the gifted participants:

Gifted 1: “I studied my lessons to the last detail. I studied in advance, too. I did a lot of exercises, including those only for enrichment. I learned my Math by starting with something simple, doing some “dirty work” (lots of computation, exercises), before getting to the general idea. I did a lot of proving exercises, even those that are for leisure, just to keep my brain attuned to mathematical reasoning. “

Gifted 4: “If I don't understand the lessons, I result to writing notes and finding other references. If the subjects require computation, I solve problems until I get the process and the reason behind it. “

Gifted 2: “I prefer to study alone so I can focus and study at my own pace. I also like to watch available videos about how things are done. I also prefer to have a hands-on experience on the subject. I don't go immediately on the topic or the readings. I sometimes take a stroll, watch a movie, read a different book, or clean my room first, or do anything that comes to my mind until I have the mood for studying. I prefer looking for main themes from readings and dislike too much wordiness when the main idea is just simple. Either I highlight texts or make a summary of what I understood. “

Gifted 5: “I am visual; I tend to study easier when I see graphs, charts and samples. I am not a conventional student. I don't study for several hours. I browse my notes for at least an hour before exams and presentation. “

Gifted 8: “I am an auditory learner and I understand things easily if the one who teaches makes the theories tangible by citing its application to daily life. Also, I prepare for the academic papers and exams only one or two days before the day of submission/ day of examination, usually from 3 am up to 7 am. “

### **Table 3 Study Habits of Selected Filipino Gifted**

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- Study at their own pace
  - Look for other sources of information
  - Devise own way to learn
  - Use different media to study
  - Always want to understand concepts that seem difficult to others
  - Eager to discover how things work
  - Ask unconventional questions
  - Experience boredom when the lessons and activities are not challenging
  - Accept challenging tasks
  - Love to learn what interests them
  - Capable of abstract and concrete thinking
- 

The researcher noted that the gifted have a good sense of humor too. There was no dull moment while discussing with them. They shared funny anecdotes and crack jokes that

can make people smile or laugh. Their sense of humor is so natural. They can always inject humor into their ideas in a very natural way.

Seven of the participants shared that their special abilities or giftedness started to manifest as potentials when they were young children. Some of the early manifestations of their giftedness are shown in Table 4. According to them, these were easily observed and detected by their teachers from preschool and elementary.

**Table 4. Behavioral Characteristics of Gifted Individuals in their Early Years**

- Shows high interest in doing academic tasks
  - Asks unconventional questions
  - Uses advanced vocabulary
  - Has interest in learning new skills and talents
  - Shows curiosity in knowing how things work
  - Wants to share new ideas & shows interests in classroom discussions
  - Is diligent in studying
  - Searches for additional knowledge through advanced reading and discussion with adults
  - Possess advanced reading and comprehension skills
  - Manifests early interest in Science and Mathematics
  - Shows special interest in Music and Arts
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They have already shown interest and excellent abilities in Language, Sciences, and Mathematics since they were young as observed by their parents and teachers. For example, four of the gifted said:

Gifted 8: “My skills, talents and abilities started to surface when I was 3 years old due to my participation in our church activities. It was also during that time that I started studying our encyclopedia and started staring at the diagrams and photographs in it. “

Gifted 9: “As early as elementary, I already love reading. I was always absent because I easily got bored, but I passed all my exams and won all the contests I joined.”

Gifted 10: ”I liked science during my elementary days. I always wanted a systematic and methodological way of thinking.”

Gifted 3: “My intellectual abilities have already developed since I was in Kindergarten.”

Gifted 5: “I was in Grade 3 when they observed that I have special academic abilities. When I was 9 years old, I was already showing deep interest and developing talent in Arts. “

The two other gifted in music developed their interests in playing musical instruments when they were in the elementary grades. However, there were no music lessons or musical instruments for them to use then so they joined the church’s band. For example, two of them mentioned:

Gifted 7: “I have already had the desire to study musical instruments since I was an elementary pupil. “

Gifted 6: “The interest is there but there were no music lessons in elementary. “

These data can provide basis that there are potentially gifted learners in different schools that need proper attention and support. Given the proper academic training and positive learning environment, these gifted potentials can be further developed.

## *II. Nurture: The Importance of School Experience*

All of the gifted agreed that school experience is a major factor in the development and nurture of their giftedness. The participants had very positive experiences in school. Their schools provided them with various curricular and extra-curricular activities that were helpful in providing them with good exposure and socialization. They had good teachers too. Their teachers became sources of inspiration and guidance to their academic journey. Four of the gifted said during the interview:

Gifted 1: “My Math skills emerged with the motivation and inspiration by my Math teacher back in first year high school. “

Gifted 8: “My teachers helped me by sending me as the representative of our school to different competitions. They also gave exciting research works, invited us to lectures and fora, and promoted an atmosphere of freedom in class discussions, giving me the chance to articulate my views and defend my side.”

Gifted 9: “My teachers discovered that I have talent in writing poems and short stories. So they encouraged me to join writing workshops and school competitions. My teachers expect me to be creative through the tasks that they gave, like writing literary pieces, play, and challenging art works. “

Gifted 10: “My teachers in elementary school were good! They inspired me. They were instrumental in discovering my strengths and potentials, especially in Science. They allowed me to see how theories can be put to different contexts.“

One important lesson for educators and schools is the importance of making gifted programs more accessible for all students. The gifted individuals in this study had access to schools that have good programs and good teachers. This helped them develop and enhance their abilities and potentials. Their journey in school started with interest and curiosity that later on, through positive learning experiences and school support, grew into outstanding ability and talent. Gifted 1 and Gifted 7 even made suggestions on how the basic education curriculum in the Philippines can be improved so that gifted and potentially gifted students’ needs could be met. Three of the gifted elaborately said the following during the interview:

Gifted 1: “I think that while basic education sort of “cares” for the intellectually challenged by providing a minimum list of standards to be achieved, at the same time it must also offer opportunities for brilliant students to excel, perform more, and learn more. Or else they’ll get bored for hearing things in class that they already know. They who have the basic knowledge and skills already and the intrinsic ingenuity and creativity should be engaged in activities that involve mentally creative processes. “

Gifted 7: “I guess teachers should design school programs that will discover and develop the abilities and talents of the students. “

The gifted also experienced some struggles in school as they encountered pressures and expectations that brought unexpected stresses and sometimes isolation from peers. Sometimes, they developed negative behaviors especially when their needs are not satisfied and when they were in an environment where their talents and abilities are not valued.

Table 5 summarizes some of the responses of the gifted towards traditional learning. Davis, Rimm, and Siegle (2011) considered these as negative behaviors of gifted individuals. However, after the researcher's immersion and interview with gifted individuals, it appears that there are valid reasons for these, and that these behaviors are not to be considered negative. They are behavioral responses of the gifted as a result of their negative experiences in school due to irrelevant instruction, boring classrooms, irrelevant classroom rules, and being handled by teachers who are not performing. Gifted students dislike traditional learning characterized by daily routines, memorization, and unchallenging learning tasks and lessons.

**Table 5 Behavioral Response of Selected Filipino Gifted to Traditional Learning**

- Exhibits underachievement in areas uninteresting for them
- Easily gets frustrated
- Does not want to conform
- Always questions rules
- Impatient
- Prefers to study/work alone when things don't go right

Gifted 6 and 7 did not perform well in subject areas that they were not interested in. Gifted 1, 3, and 9 easily got frustrated when their expectations in class were not met. In fact, Gifted 9 lost interest in schooling when she was in elementary because she found the lessons boring. Gifted 3 thinks that his elementary schooling did not develop his intellectual abilities at all. Gifted 2, 4, 9, and 10 questioned the rules given by teachers when they think these rules were not logical and do not make sense. All gifted participants had their own ways of doing things, and they tended to be impatient when the lessons were not interesting or challenging. The gifted participants preferred to work or study alone, especially when they wanted to learn more about the lesson.

The learning environment, school activities, and teachers played an important role in providing nurture for the gifted. The positive experiences of the gifted with their schools and teachers have always been sources of inspiration to them.

*III. Culture: The Social Environment of the Gifted*

The gifted participants have normal lives with their families, classmates, and peers. Filipinos are family-oriented people. Their happy dispositions in life could be a product of happy experiences with family, school, and in the community where they belong as reflected in the following statements given by six of the gifted:

Gifted 1: "My grandmother who raised me always pushed me to study harder."

Gifted 2: "My family is a great source of motivation and support. My parents also expect me to support them when they grow old, as taught in Filipino culture."

- Gifted 3: “My family was always supportive though they also provided pressure through their high expectations. Their moral support was crucial in my development but not their expectations. The church comprise pretty much of my social life/space so I think it also contributed to my development. “
- Gifted 5: “The members of my family were the first ones to believe in me before I even believed in myself. They provided me strength, love and inspiration.”
- Gifted 10: “I come from a rural community where growing-up life is mainly home, school, and church. I think church/religion has a role [in my development]. It influenced my life options/ decision-making, which contributed much on who I am today. “
- Gifted 8: “My family helps me in developing my skills and abilities by providing my material needs and for providing me the necessary emotional support and guidance as I pursue my studies. We talk as a family together. This deepened my respect for diversity of opinion and deepened my understanding of life. “

These statements further support the study of Garn, Matthews, and Jolly (2010), Pawilen (2018) that the home environment can have a significant impact on the academic motivation of gifted students. The result also supports the study of Gottfried, Fleming, and Gottfried (1998) that shows direct effect of the home environment of the gifted students on achievement. The selected Filipino gifted students in this study are intrinsically driven by their families to excel and develop their gifted potentials.

Four of the respondents (Gifted 2, 3, 6 and 7) mentioned about the influence of friends, neighborhood, and exposure in different church activities. Nine of the respondents were Christians. The church have in many ways provided them an alternative venue in developing their talents and leadership skills. They believe that faith in God and religion has influenced them in their lives as reflected on the following examples of their statements:

- Gifted 2: “Faith in God actually kept me going. I never lost hope, I never backed down, because faith showed me that there is someone who is in control of all things and can turn bad situations into good opportunities; thus, faith somehow eradicated my fears of going beyond my comfort zones. It also gave me hope that I can strive for greater things. “
- Gifted 4: “I always believed in a greater being. Some things are unexplainable.”
- Gifted 5: “There were those times that I almost wanted to give up, but I have my faith to hold on to. I wanted to believe that there is someone up there watching over me. “
- Gifted 8: “Apart from my family, it is my faith as a Methodist that is a key factor in my development as an individual. It is my personal relationship with Jesus Christ that gave my life its purpose t. It is the democratic church structure and liberating theology and atmosphere that fostered my desire to ask questions and to share my opinions over questions. This allowed me also develop my leadership skills.

Contrary to popular belief that many intellectuals especially in the field of science do not believe in God, the case of the gifted participants in this study reflects that majority of them did not lose belief in God because of their positive family religious culture. This

result could also hold true in the case of many gifted individuals in the country. There were no serious behavioral problems experienced by the gifted in this study because they have happy relationships with their families and active involvement in church activities since they were young. They received proper support from various sectors in the society especially their families and friends. Five of the gifted participants did not come from affluent families but they have had positive relationships and nurturing environments at home.

### Summary and Conclusion

There are several lessons learned from the study. First, gifted students generally possess high intellectual ability, outstanding talent, multiple exemplary skills, leadership abilities, and potentials. It is their nature to be gifted in various fields and domains. Table 6 shows that gifted in Philippine context can be uniquely classified into 2 categories: *intellectually gifted* and *especially talented*. Under these categories are different behavioral characteristics that make them different from normal individuals and ordinary students.

**Table 6. Summary of Behaviors and Characteristics of Selected Filipino Gifted**

Category of Giftedness	Unique Behavioral Characteristics	Common Characteristics
<b>Intellectually Gifted</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Possesses high intellectual ability</li> <li>• Open-minded and thinks analytically</li> <li>• Capable of interdisciplinary thinking</li> <li>• Insightful</li> <li>• Inquisitive</li> <li>• Interested in advanced and various topics</li> <li>• Independent Learner</li> <li>• Capable of doing multi-task</li> <li>• Persistent and Highly motivated</li> <li>• Thinks unconventionally</li> <li>• Has high expectations of self</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Exhibits leadership ability</li> <li>• Has high sense of social responsibility</li> <li>• Highly motivated and goal-oriented</li> <li>• Highly motivated and goal-oriented</li> <li>• Possess special abilities and talents</li> <li>• Creative</li> <li>• Good sense of humor</li> </ul>
<b>Special Talent</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Special talent in Music, Arts and Sports</li> </ul>	

While those who are intellectually gifted also possess some special talents, this study found out that there are some of those gifted with special talents who have normal academic performance; their special talents outshine their academic skills. Both the intellectually gifted and those with special talents possess leadership skills.

Second, giftedness can be nurtured. The data describing the characteristics of the selected Filipino gifted have great implications for teachers. Table 7 provides some strategies that schools and teachers can adapt to support the needs of gifted individuals.

An excellent curriculum supported by a positive school environment is important in nurturing gifted and potentially gifted learners in school. A special form of academic

support, co-curricular and extra-curricular activities can be planned for gifted students to further enhance their abilities and talents.

Third, the success of the gifted in every endeavor is also influenced by cultural factors. In the Philippines, religion, culture, and socio-economic status play an important role in harnessing the abilities and talents of the gifted. It seems that religion plays an important factor in the development of gifted individuals. Majority of the gifted believe that their giftedness is a gift from God. Thus, they believe that they should use it for the benefit of many people and they should strive to develop it. Their involvement in the programs of their church played an important role in nurturing their giftedness.

Family factor also needs to be considered. The gifted have happy and very supportive families that provide them emotional support. Majority of the gifted participants in this study come from low-income families, but this was never a reason for them not to pursue their interests in life. Gifted students from low-income families tend to develop survival skills efficiently. They understand that poverty is not a hindrance for success. They are motivated to improve their lives.

**Table 7. School-based Strategies for Supporting Gifted Individuals**

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- Provide co-curricular and extra-curricular activities that will expose the learners to other areas of interests and other disciplines.
  - Develop school activities where parents and other stakeholders can participate in.
  - The school should have effective guidance and counseling programs.
  - Encourage mentoring programs especially for the gifted individuals.
  - Some form of acceleration or differentiation can be planned for gifted and potentially gifted students to further nurture and develop their abilities and talents.
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In terms of needs, the study corroborates with other researchers that the gifted need positive emotional support and an encouraging environment. Gifted individuals need academic spaces or academic environments that are safe, nurturing, challenging, and mentally engaging. They need venues to express their gifted abilities and special talents. They need to feel that schools and communities value them and their ideas. They do not need special recognition; they simply wanted to feel that they are normal members of their families, schools, and communities. That shows that their emotional need is bigger than the intellectual challenge that they need to be engaged in school and in the community.

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